

TO: Tom Herbert , Assistant Technical Director

RE: Ivy Convention, Engineering Seminar (28 April 1951)

The Engineers and the Technicians were put together in one seminar. The result was that about half the meeting was devoted to Engineering techniques and problems. I have not attempted to cover the technical phase of the meeting because I do not believe that I possess the knowledge to do a good job. Pete Maxwell and Hal Collins were there and you had better discuss the technical phase with them. The Engineering division of the Technical Department was represented by Evan Gray, John Helm, Bob Gordon, and myself. Since I believe that I took the most extensive notes, I took it upon myself to write this report. I believe that Evan Gray took a list of those present, although I am not sure. All in all there was not much concrete achieved as far as the problems of engineering was concerned. Much of the time was taken over by the Harvard delegate and the problems of his station. Less frequent but more valuable comments were presented by the Yale and Dartmouth delegates.

The first topic discussed was the problem of shipping programs around on tape. A survey of the different stations disclosed the fact that most had machines that had the two speeds - 7 ft./sec and 15 ft./sec. It was decided that any exchange should be done using the 7 ft./sec because there would seldom be the need for the higher fidelity and the slower speed allowed more compact packages for shipping. It was the unanimous feeling that single track recordings

should be made. The smaller reels should be used when possible.

It was also decided that disks were impracticable for the exchange of network programs. It was pointed out that their use was sometimes good for the individual stations for recording for people. It was, however, costly and needed a large personnel for their production. It was not held advisable to try disk recording unless the station had the right equipment and the personnel. There was not enough profit unless the finished product was sold at a high price. There was also legal problems in recording for individual people.

There was not much said on the problem of mike placement. Most of the discussion boiled down to a description of the various stations with Harvard taking the lead. It was pointed out that it was better for the players and the audience for the sound effects to be played through a speaker in a studio where the broadcast was being made. There the sound effects would be picked up by a mike instead of being put through another channel where the actors could not hear them. It was pointed out that this method was used on most of the large stations.

The last question covered on the engineering side of the conference was that of candidates. Most of the stations have a definite "healing period". It seems that more emphasis is put on the idea that the candidate is working for the station and the senior members instead of working with them. There is much emphasis on tradition. Here Yale ad-

mitted that they lost many of the more experienced personnel who did not like the idea of healing but would rather start right in training for their department. They said that this problem did not bother them. Harvard is just getting to the point where they separate the engineers and the technician. They are also making everyone try to do some console work. They said that this helped to integrate the station - especially Business and Public Relations. They have practical tests where announcers create problems for the engineer to solve. Practical and trick questions are put on the written exams. Also a specific exam is given for the members of the whole station. In addition to the regular training in the department the candidates are asked to prepare lectures on the various phases and problems of engineering. These lectures given by the candidates under the guidance of the senior members of the department. Yale was the only other one to present a picture of their candidate period. First the candidate needs to have an average of 70 or better. He works for both the station and the department. He has one day a week when he works for the station from 4:00 until 1:00. He has one day a week that he works on the early morning program. There is also a day that he can not come down to the station. This is the time that he is to concentrate on his studies. He works on shifts and not for the specific programs. He must sell a minimum amount of advertising. I believe that the amount is not \$15.00. During the period the candidate must have announcing and console training. At the end of the period he is given tests (no details were given). Grades are given for the tests, the performance

during the period, and the amount of work done - one point being given for each minute of work done. During the period the healers (candidates) are posted as being in one of the ~~ix~~ three thirds of the group. All Saturday is given for the candidates' practice. The time for the candidates' practice on the various stations varied as the valuable time was different for the various stations.

There was not much more said on the field of engineering and the discussion turned for the rest of the time to technical problems.

In general it seems that we stand in a pretty good place in relation to the other stations. I think that our method of training candidates is better as we are not tied up in the mess of tradition. There is more room for the good man to progress as fast as he can. Many of the stations wanted to eliminate the idea of personality from the candidate period but I can not believe in this since the personality of the candidate is so important and is reflected in the quality of the work he does and the attitude that he has towards the station and his fellow workers. There was not too much covered. I hope that I have recorded the important facts here. I strongly recommend that you see the other engineers mentioned above as they might be able to fill in the places that I have left blank.

Respectfully submitted,

John Scott Tasker

John Scott Tasker
Senior Staff Engineer